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**FORMER PHILADELPHIA POLICE OFFICER CONVICTED
OF DRUG CONSPIRACY**

PHILADELPHIA - Zachary Young, 52, and Mark Williams, 27, both of Philadelphia, were convicted today of a drug conspiracy in which a phony arrest was orchestrated in order to steal drugs from a drug dealer. At the time of the crime, Williams was a Philadelphia Police Officer assigned to the 39th District. Zachary Young was a heroin distributor. In April 2010, Young and co-defendant Angel Ortiz hatched a plan to steal heroin from their supplier, Miguel Santiago. The scheme involved a phony arrest by Williams and his co-defendant, then-officer James Venezia, orchestrated by then-officer Robert Snyder and his wife, Christal Snyder. After the phony arrest, the defendants then distributed the heroin to a person they thought was a drug dealer and money launderer, but who was actually an undercover Special Agent from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

In addition to the conspiracy, Young was also convicted of one count of distribution of heroin, and one count of using a telephone in furtherance of a drug conspiracy. Williams was additionally convicted of possession with the intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin within 1,000 feet of a school, distributing and aiding and abetting the distribution of heroin, using a telephone in furtherance of a drug conspiracy, conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery, attempted Hobbs Act robbery, and using and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

According to the superseding indictment, the defendants attempted to rob someone they believed was a member of the "Mafia," but who in reality was an undercover FBI agent. Ortiz believed that the "Mafia" member routinely collected large amounts of gambling proceeds from individuals in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and then delivered those proceeds to be laundered by who they believed was a drug dealer and money launderer, but who in reality was an undercover Special Agent with the DEA. The indictment details how a scheme was developed whereby defendant Williams and Robert Snyder, abused their positions as Philadelphia Police officers, by planning to have defendant Williams conduct a vehicle stop while defendant Ortiz was in possession of the United States Currency and a small amount of narcotics. After finding the narcotics and United States Currency, Williams would make it appear as if he was arresting Ortiz and seizing the money and drugs. To ensure that the "Mafia" member believed that the seizure was legitimate police activity, defendant Williams provided Ortiz with a Philadelphia Police Department property receipt.

On June 25, 2010 Williams was placed on restricted duty by the Philadelphia Police Department. As a result, he was not permitted to wear a police uniform, not permitted to carry a weapon on or off duty and was not permitted to take any police action. Additionally, Williams was required to, and did turn in his Police Department issued weapon. Despite these restrictions, an attempt to commit the robbery took place on July 9, 2010. Williams recruited another person, who drove a vehicle equipped with strobe lights, to pretend to be an undercover police officer to assist in the vehicle stop. Williams then, while off duty, and on restricted duty, armed himself with his personal handgun, and took, without authorization, a Philadelphia Police Department vehicle from the 39th Police district. After meeting with Ortiz and discussing the final arrangement, Williams and the other person took their positions to await the arrival of the "Mafia" member.

U.S. District Court Judge Harvey Bartle did not yet schedule a sentencing hearing but did immediately revoke Williams' bail. Young, who has been in custody, faces a maximum sentence of 84 years in prison with a mandatory minimum term of five years. Williams faces a maximum sentence of life in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of 10 years. Co-defendants Santiago, Venezia, Robert and Christal Snyder, and Ortiz pleaded guilty prior to trial and are awaiting sentencing.

The case was investigated by The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the cooperation and assistance of the Philadelphia Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Maureen McCartney and Anthony Wzorek.

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